

JON S. CORZINE
Governor

New Jersey Office of the Attorney General

Division of Consumer Affairs
State Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners
124 Halsey Street, 6th Floor, Newark, NJ 07102



ANNE MILGRAM
Attorney General

STEPHEN B. NOLAN
Acting Director

July 31, 2007

RECEIVED and FILED by the
NEW JERSEY STATE BOARD OF
VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS
on this date of: *[Signature]*
AUG 15 2007

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 45020
Newark, NJ 07101
(973) 504-6500

By Certified and Regular Mail

Sara A. Quinn Amento, D.V.M.
37 Headley Avenue
Morris Plains, New Jersey 07950

Re: I/M/O SARA A. QUINN AMENTO, D.V.M.
Complaint Number: 06-080

Offer of Settlement in Lieu of Disciplinary Proceeding

Dear Dr. Quinn Amento:

This letter is to advise you that the New Jersey Board of Veterinary Medical Examiners (hereinafter referred to as the "Board") has had an opportunity to review information it received concerning your professional conduct following its consideration of a consumer complaint filed by Sam and Lindsey Wunderle. The complainants allege, among other contentions, that you engaged in negligence in regards to treatment you rendered to their six (6) year old Shih Tzu, "Maggie" on October 4, 2006.

Specifically, the information reviewed by the Board included, but is not limited to the following documents:

1. A complaint filed on or about December 7, 2006, by Sam and Lindsey Wunderle, as well as any and all attachments and exhibits; and
2. A correspondence, dated January 21, 2007, from Sara A. Quinn Amento, D.V.M., to the Board, as well as any and all attachments and exhibits.

Upon review of all available information, the Board has preliminarily found that probable cause exists to support a finding that you engaged in professional misconduct, in violation of N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(e), in that you failed to adequately communicate with Maggie's owners in order to ascertain the

Specifically, the Board's review into the matter revealed that you examined Maggie on October 4, 2006. The record indicated that this was not a previously scheduled appointment. Rather, Maggie presented in the office as an unscheduled walk-in and requested care while you were in the midst of attending to your regularly scheduled appointments. The record in this matter further reveals that the dog had a history of keratoconjunctivis sicca and while she had been a patient at your facility since May 2006, this was the first time you were asked to provide veterinary medical services to Maggie. As such, you attempted initially to read the dog's medical record in order to familiarize yourself with Maggie's condition. Unfortunately, the records were difficult to read and to understand the information necessary to properly treat the dog. You then physically examined the dog and, as you indicated in your January 21, 2007 letter to the Board in this matter, ". . . based your best assumption if the current medication schedule from the records, and made the appropriate changes." However, you provided veterinary medical care, including examination and treatment recommendations, to Maggie without ever speaking to the owner. All communications were done via a veterinary technician. Ultimately, the corneal in Maggie's right eye ruptured and later, on October 12, 2006, the right eye was removed by another veterinarian at your facility.

The Board has concluded, following its review of this complaint, that you engaged in professional misconduct, in violation of N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(e), in that you failed to adequately communicate with the dog's owners. The Board concludes that your reliance on third party information from your veterinary technician, in light of the facts that you had never treated Maggie prior to October 4th and that her medical records were difficult to understand, constitutes professional misconduct. The Board finds that while other factors existed that led to the removal of Maggie's right eye, your failure to directly communicate with the owners to ascertain their concerns as well as clarify any questions you may have had following your inability to understand the medical records, certainly exacerbated the sad circumstances in this matter. The Board has concluded that your conduct detailed above constitutes a violation of N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(e).

At this juncture, the Board has determined that the above violation is sufficient to warrant the initiation of formal disciplinary proceedings against you. Notwithstanding that determination, however, the Board has determined that it will first offer you an opportunity to settle this matter, and thereby avoid the initiation of disciplinary proceedings, should you consent to:

1. A formal reprimand for engaging in professional misconduct, contrary to N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(e); and

2. Pay a penalty in the amount of \$1,000.00, for engaging in professional misconduct, to be paid contemporaneously with your signing of the acknowledgment at the bottom of this letter of your violation of N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(e).

If you are willing to settle this matter on the offered settlement terms, you may do so by signing the acknowledgment at the bottom of this letter, and returning it to the Board office. In such event, this letter will be a matter of public record.

In the event you are unwilling to settle this matter on the offered terms, it will be referred to the Attorney General's office for the initiation of appropriate disciplinary action. In such event, you will be afforded an opportunity to defend against the alleged violations. If an evidentiary hearing is deemed warranted, the Board will either conduct that hearing at a date and time to be scheduled or refer the matter to the Office of Administrative Law. You are advised, however, that in the event formal charges are filed, the Board may assess civil penalties in an amount greater than that herein offered in settlement should any charges against you be sustained.

Additionally, the Board may, if the facts are found to so warrant, enter an order, requiring you to reimburse certain monies and/or requiring you to pay costs incurred by the Board. Should you have any questions concerning this letter or the settlement offer herein, I suggest that you contact Deputy Attorney General Olga E. Bradford, who may be reached at (973) 648-3639.


If you elect to settle this matter presently, you should sign the acknowledgment at the bottom of this letter and return it to the Board within fifteen (15) days following your receipt of this letter. In the event the Board receives no response from you within fifteen (15) days, the Board's settlement offer will be withdrawn, and the matter will be referred to the Attorney General's office for the initiation of the appropriate enforcement action.

NEW JERSEY STATE BOARD OF
VETERINARY MEDICAL EXAMINERS

By: _____

Leslie G. Aronson
LESLIE G. ARONSON
Executive Director

ACKNOWLEDGMENT: I, SARA A. QUINN AMENTO, D.V.M., hereby acknowledge that I have read and reviewed the settlement proposal set forth in the above letter. I acknowledge the conduct which has been charged. I am aware that, by signing this acknowledgment, I am waiving my rights I may have to defend myself against any charges of wrongdoing at an administrative hearing. I am also aware that the action taken against me by the Board herein is a matter of public record, and that this letter is a public document. I hereby agree to pay a penalty in the amount of \$1,000.00, which is to be paid upon signing of this acknowledgment, for engaging in professional misconduct in violation of N.J.S.A. 45:1-21(e).


SARA A. QUINN AMENTO, D.V.M.

DATED:

cc: Olga E. Bradford, Deputy Attorney General